

REVIEWS OF BOOKS AND AUDIOVISUAL AIDS

Lawrence M. Solomon, M.D.
Review Editor

Anionic Surfactants—Biochemistry, Toxicology, Dermatology, Vol 10, Surfactant Science Series, Edited by Christian Gloxhuber, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1980

This book is volume 10 in the well-respected Surfactant Science Series. It is of particular importance to dermatologists because the anionic surfactants are in considerable contact with human skin. The book addresses clinical areas of interest for anionic surfactants such as biochemistry; pharmacology; toxicology (particularly cutaneous and mucous membrane tolerance); carcinogenic, mutagenic and teratogenic properties; and daily human intake.

It is well-organized and well-written by basic scientists eminent in the field, European as well as American, and generally industry based rather than academic based. Two previous volumes in this series dealt with the basic science of the anionic surfactants, while other earlier volumes covered cationic and nonionic surfactants.

Local tolerance and animal testing comprise the most substantial chapter in this book (representing almost 40% of the contents). A chapter on cutaneous observations in humans is much shorter, and deals with irritant and allergic contact dermatitis associated with anionic surfactants as well as their effects on mucous membranes.

This book is an appropriate reference volume for dermatologists and other scientists in dermatological research, particularly for those with a research interest in biological activity and toxicology of surfactants, especially relative to contact dermatitis. Although it is of limited usefulness to the clinician, its greatest utility is that it covers a group of chemicals that are responsible for a great deal of human skin contact in our environment.

Dennis P. West, M.S.
Chicago

Clinical Immunodermatology, Mark V. Dahl, Yearbook Medical Publishers, Chicago, 1981 (280 pp, \$27.50)

There are many books about clinical immunology presently available, and most of them pay appropriate respect to the cutaneous aspects of immunological disease. Therefore, a new book, especially one authored by a young investigator, has to offer a considerable amount of competitive spirit to generate enough courage in the reviewer to read it, let alone to recommend it. No worry. Dr. Dahl has done better than a fine job. "Clinical Immunodermatology" is a winner all the way, a veritable early Valenzuela performance. Here are a dozen reasons to buy this little book.

1. In a specialty renowned for describing the immune reactions in sentences as contorted, lengthy, and complex as some of the procedures it uses, this book is written in clear, simple sentences. Dr. Katz's preface is accurate.

2. It is written for clinicians, using clinical models. The first 100 pages are devoted to basic science, the last 150 to clinical disorders. This is an appropriate balance.

3. In about 250 pages one has a recent summary of a complex literature with very judicious use of references at the end of each chapter.

4. It is inexpensive. I do not mind paying heavily for a text but resent having to do so in a field which is undergoing such constant change.

5. Most of the diagrams are clear and simple (even if the tables are a bit cluttered).

6. The salient points are put in a **REMEMBER-THIS-BOX** on many pages.

7. A glossary introduces the first 6 chapters.

8. Where the author speculates he often sets the speculative portion off from the rest of the chapter by labeling the paragraph "Hypothesis." If you disagree with the speculation, just ignore it.

9. There is an excellent 15-page appendix which clearly describes the fundamentals and significance of immunofluorescence tests.

10. Chapter 13 forms an unusual presentation on nonimmunological, immunological, and necrobiotic granulomas. Here the material presented is in highly selective form, and the reader may want a standard textbook of dermatology to accompany the material which is coherently, if not comprehensively exposed.

11. Chapters 7 and 8 offer a handy guide to the use of the laboratory and clinical recognition of the immunodeficiency dermatologic disorders.

12. The immunobulbous disorders are beautifully presented.

There were a few jarring notes with which one could take exception, but far fewer than exist in most texts of this size. I am not sure psoriasis or atopic dermatitis deserve the prominence they receive as subjects of separate chapters, especially since Dr. Dahl accurately observes that "an immunologic basis for atopic dermatitis is less obvious (today) than it was 20 years ago" and that his treatment of psoriasis is "highly speculative."

This book is too simple for investigators in the field. It is highly recommended to all students, residents, and practitioners of dermatology and allergy.

LAWRENCE M. SOLOMON, M.D.

Diagnosis of Skin Disease, Gerald S. Lazarus and Lowell A. Goldsmith, F. A. Davis Company, 1980 (506 pp, \$30)

This is exactly what it says, a book on the diagnosis of skin disease; pathophysiology and therapy are not included. The original layout aims to categorize skin diseases by their morphological appearance, so that, having identified the important characteristics of his/her patient's lesions, the user can turn to the relevant section, narrow down the diagnostic possibilities and find a short description of the likely diseases.

Initially simple skin diagnostic procedures are described and various morphologic characteristics defined. Each chapter is tagged in the right hand margin of the right hand page with the section (morphologic diagnostic) heading, and each disease depicted has a brief description with black and white photographs and a distribution diagram. Where necessary, histology is described. There is an index of differential diagnosis at the end of the book.

The idea is good and the descriptions are clear and concise. Unfortunately, the index of differential diagnosis does not give page numbers so that, having identified a disease here one either has to turn to the regular index at the back or the chapter heading index at the front of the book. The tagging of each chapter in the right hand margin does not obviate the need for easy indexing.